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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the nature of the relationships developed between the technical assistance team of the Documentation and Technical Assistance (DTA) Project and members of a Chicago (Illinois) school district staff with whom the DTA worked. First, the methodology with which the technical assistance work was studied is described, as is the staffing process of the study team. Then, the structure of the Chicago Assistance Team and how that structure relates to building and maintaining relationships are discussed. This section of the paper details the ongoing nature of relationships, utilization of prior relationships, networking, resource provision, and linking to researchers. The following section reviews tactics utilized in relationship building, including: (1) involving school participants in contact events; (2) designing activities that require cooperation; (3) preparing for school visits; (4) utilizing outside resources; (5) maintaining relationships; (6) correcting misrepresentations; and (7) ending relationships. Also examined are the importance of individual relationships and team functioning and the way that the internal functioning of the DTA team affected relationships with school staff. Trust and shared experiences are concluded to be the most important aspects of relationship building in technical assistance efforts. (GC)

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BUILDING, MAINTAINING, AND ENDING RELATIONSHIPS: AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT AND A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

DOCUMENTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN URBAN SCHOOLS

Manford L. Holmes

November 1979

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Documentation and Technical Assistance in Urban Schools Project (DTA) is an effort to learn more about how to make urban public schools work better for urban students. Toward this end, DTA combines educational research and practice within one project. DTA's mandate has three interrelated parts:

DOCUMENTATION - to study, using primarily ethnographic techniques, the ways in which selected urban schools organize themselves to solve problems. Documentation focuses upon nine sites throughout the country selected and funded by NIE to continue to engage in locally initiaited improvement activities.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - to develop in practice specific strategies which are designed to improve urban public schooling. Technical assistance strategies are based in part upon documentation of useful practices in the nine funded sites.

LINKAGE - to increase understanding, through observation of DTA's attemps to link documentation with technical assistance, of the process through which research can be useful to practice, and practice can influence research.

This study is a product of the documentation effort. The ideas, commitment, hard work, successes and disappointments of the people directly working within urban schools on a day-to-day basis are in a very real sense the base of DTA. It is our hope that this description and analysis will be useful to researchers, policy planners and particularly to the people who work directly in schools in their efforts to improve the quality and validity of the educational experiences for urban students.

Thomas A. Wilson
Project Director

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INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the nature of the relationships that developed between the DTA *Technical Assistance Team as it worked in a Chicago School District and members of the School District staff. If there is an argument behind this paper it is that building and maintaining relationships between Technical Assistance staff and school staff is the core of any sustained technical assistance effort. This fact is frequently overlooked or not considered carefully enough in discussions about technical assistance. The effects on both technical assistance and school staff of confronting the complexities and difficulties in building and maintaining relationships is frequently oversimplified. The main purpose of this paper is to pinpoint and describe some of the basic ingredients as they emerged from the work of the Chicago Technical Assistance Team through day-to-day participant observation of their work.

*DTA: Documentation and Technical Assistance Project, a contract awarded by the National Institute of Education to the Center for New Schools and its subcontractor, the Center for Educational Policy and Management. The project was an effort to learn more about how to make urban schools work better for urban students. The project combined carrying out educational research and providing technical assistance as part of its work. The work was designed to share what was learned with teachers, parents, administrators, the educational research community, grups or agencies working to assist urban schools, and policy makers.

I. METHODOLOGY

This paper results from the work of the DTA Study Team, whose prime purpose was to document the DTA Assistance Team activities at the Assistance sites. This documentation activity was designed to assess the short and long term effects of the assistance work and included feedback to the assistance teams. To achieve these goals the Study Team employed both quantitative and qualitative research strategies. This paper is built particularly from the qualitative descriptive field work that was intended to provide contextual information about observable effects of specific inputs from assistance team activities.

A. Methodological Underpinnings

The Study Team started with the following assumptions about our work.

1. School people in urban settings have a right to be concerned about researchers coming into the setting to collect information and write about them. The perception of school practitioners that researchers are not generally to be trusted as working in the interest of practitioners is based on past experience and is basically legitimate.

2. The experience of the project staff members who have worked in urban school settings is useful information for anticipating some of the problems and issues one

might encounter in attempting to document assistance activities in a school setting.

3. Research is an important tool for getting information from one place and using it to stimulate ideas for improving what is going on in another place. Research is most useful when it is done in response to a particular need rather than done for the sake of research. In other words we shared the belief that educators do not and should not have to "re-invent the wheel." There should be mechanisms for capturing what has been learned in one setting so that people in other settings may benefit from previous experience. Research appeared to be one of the most, if not the most important mechanisms.

4. School people are capable of doing their own research yet often do not have the time and other resources that are required. It is possible for an assistance team to encourage and assist a school district in improvement efforts. In fact many of the school people we interacted with share personal hypotheses and topics that they would pursue, regarding educational activities in the school district if they had more time.

The Study Team Staffing in the Chicago Region

The methodology of the Study Team is presented in more detail in the Appendix. There are several points about our study of the Chicago Team that need to be highlighted here. Attention must first be given to the issue of selection of a field researcher for the Chicago Region. The Chicago field research position was a half-time position I filled prior to becoming the director of the team, and a half time person was hired. Thus, we are not able to document the activities of the Assistance Team as consistently as anticipated if we had had one full-time Study Team field researcher available to document the Assistance Team's activities throughout. After the new field researcher was selected, along with being the Study Team director, I documented some events that could not be covered by the half-time field researcher. This pattern of documentation activity also meant that as the author of this paper I worked both from firsthand observation and the analysis of another field worker's observations.

The main approach to the field work in Chicago was on-site participant observation. Field researchers concentrated our observations particularly on school-site activities, such as Assistance Team members meeting with the principal and teachers at the school where the team focused its efforts. Field researchers also attended district level activities, observed meetings with administrators at various levels, and interviewed administrators, teachers, parents and students.

Documentation of the Chicago Region assistance team's activities included, in many instances, interaction with the team members prior to actual assistance at the school site.

II. THE DTA CHICAGO ASSISTANCE TEAM

Building relationships was not the responsibility of one individual on the Assistance Team; it was a team responsibility. Therefore, the team was structured to support the assistance work and more specifically the relationship building and maintaining process. The following section of this paper discusses the structure of the Chicago Assistance Team and how that structure relates to building and maintaining relationships.

Structure of the Team

From January 1976 to July 1977, the Chicago Region Assistance Team worked in a predominantly Black school district located on the south side of Chicago. The Assistance Team carried out district-wide assistance activities such as workshops, yet focused the bulk of its resources in an elementary school in the school district. Once all of the positions were filled, the Assistance Team was composed of six full time staff members with an organizational structure as shown in Figure 1 (on the next page.

The Chicago Region Technical Assistance Team had the following roles:

1. Technical Assistance Specialists

   The primary responsibility of the Assistance Specialist was to carry out assistance activities with people at the local school and district level. The related responsibilities included identifying the areas in which the school people

FIGURE 1: DTA Chicago Region Organizational Structure

wanted assistance, and assisting in the planning and carrying out of the steps necessary to improve their school setting.

2. Technical Assistance/Documentation Linker

This individual was responsible for the ongoing communication of information (ideas, strategies, and techniques) for providing assistance between members of the Assistance Team and members of the project's documentation (research) team which was studying nine separate assistance strategies in various parts of the United States.

3. Technical Assistance (T.A.) Analyst/Developer

This staff member kept notes of meetings and events in the school district that were carried out by the Assistance Team and interviewed school people regarding special Assistance Team activities and events. Study Team members were given copies of the Analyst/Developer's data as a supplement to the data being collected by the Study Team field researcher. The T.A. Analyst was responsible for the ongoing documentation of Assistance Team activities through feedback on the data that existed in the form of minutes of meetings, occasional video and audio tape recordings, as well as still photography. The T.A. Analyst was also the person responsible for using the data collected to develop products for the Technical Assistance Team members and for the project in general.

4. Administrative Assistant

This team member worked primarily for the Region Director to support activities such as filing, typing, assisting in planning and coordinating activities, etc.

5. Team Director

The Team Director was responsible for the leadership and direction of the Assistance Team. The Team Director was responsible to the Project Director and became the primary person communicating information from the Project Director to the other members of the Assistance Team.

Individual team members were encouraged to do the activities that were required by their role definition as well as to work supportively, and coordinate activities with other team members. In some cases this meant that team members had to negotiate for more role clarity during the assistance process, especially in the areas where there was some degree of role overlap. In a few cases some team members volunteered to assist each other on small tasks irregardless of their respective roles.

The Chicago Region Assistance Team's organization was deliberately designed to contribute to the Assistance Team's capacity to build and maintain meaningful working relationships to support its work. First, roles were designed and staff selected to maximize the usefulness of the individual's previous background and experience. It was assumed that an all Black staff would have had previous experiences that were likely

to support the development of credible relationships between Assistance Team staff and the predominantly Black district-level and local school-level participants. The two Technical Assistance Specialists had both taught in Chicago public schools and knew teachers, administrators, parents, and students as well as the Chicago Public School context in and near the District. One of the Assistance Specialist already had extensive experience working with parents of Chicago Public School students. The Technical Assistance-Documentation (TA-DOC) Linker already had developed strong work relationships with members of the DTA Documentation (Research) Team because of her previous work with that team and at CNS before DTA (for discussion of this role, see Holmes 1977a). The Analyst/Developer also had previous experience teaching in Chicago Public Schools. The Assistance Team director had lived in the district and attended school there as a child. She also had twenty three years of varied experience with the Chicago Public Schools, including nineteen years of teaching, and had developed and sustained significant relationships with individuals at the District level.

Relationships building in the Chicago Region was complicated by the fact that initial entry work was carried out by only two people: the team director and the technical assistance specialist hired first (then in the role of administrative assistant). Neither was able to spend all of her time in the school district or on the project, due to the limited number of assistance staff during the early stages of the project. Thus, while exploring potential directions for assistance activities, and providing limited assistance (primarily in the form of advice) to retain credibility, they had to avoid committing themselves

extensively to the district or to any particular project.

The concept of building and maintaining relationships was viewed as important by the members of the Chicago Assistance Team. Not only was this emphasized in defining and clarifying the roles of individual team members, but in the overall role description and functioning of the team as a whole. Team members felt that the team could be structured so that people in the school district could look at individual team members or at the structure of the team as a whole and see that the purpose of the team was to provide the best type of assistance to the school and the district.

Team Perspectives on Building Relationships

The Chicago Team was conscious of the importance of relationships to their work and developed perspectives on several issues that demonstrated their concern. In this section I describe some of these issues. The reader should note that I am presenting the Team's perspectives from my view based on the Study Team's observations.

1. Ongoing nature of relationships. The Chicago Team did not see relationships building as one stage or level of an assistance process. They saw it as ongoing and permeating the work. Thus, team members must give constant attention to relationships. The team felt that they could control to some degree the shape of the relationships and thus they needed to be conscious of how each member of the team was proceeding.

2. Relationships are directly linked to the substance of work. Team members realized that to demonstrate their usefulness, they needed to demonstrate their areas of expertise. As stated earlier

the project mandated that the team test out ideas coming out of the research going on elsewhere in the project. During the entry process the Assistance Team Director was the primary person responding to the requests for assistance in the district, as well as the primary person responsible for initiation and creation of activities that could lead to places to test the usefulness of the project's research data.

In considering the complexity of the Chicago Region Assistance Team's task of building and maintaining relationships with the school district, the fact that team members were also dealing with some complex intrateam issues--different outlooks on how the team should be managed, an initial shortage of resources and staff, coordination of the recording process with the Study Team staff and occasional differences in philosophical views--cannot be overlooked. Yet it is difficult to determine the degree to which these issues had an impact on team relationships with school people. Team members were observed discussing some of their day-to-day intrateam concerns in somewhat limited ways with school people. This often occurred when school people were in contact with a particular team member they felt comfortable with, and the conversation became one of sharing the status of work-related issues with each other. In fact, it became a part of the process of building relationships with some of the school people in that it allowed the individual team members to show that they had problems in their work settings that were comparable to the day-to-day problems of the school people. Keep in mind that this type of sharing was done in moderation and only with individuals who could be trusted to keep this type of information to himself or herself.

The assistance team placed importance on presenting themselves in a manner that demonstrated to the school people that they could be relied upon and that they could be trusted with confidential information. They also had to demonstrate that assistance team members were truthful and accurate. This was done in virtually every interaction with school people through a range of activities such as calling ahead to inform the school people in instances where the team member would be late and giving the reason for it, to arriving early for a meeting or workshop whenever possible. Other examples include bringing materials, such as a magazine or journal article, to someone in a school who might find it interesting or useful. They also wrote letters and notes to people they interacted with, to update them on the team's activities in the school district.

3. Prior relationships. One aspect of building and maintaining relationships revolved around how the assistance team got to the school district in the first place. Who initiated the interaction? who invited the team to come? Did the district ask the team to come? What is in it for me? In the Chicago work, the assistance team had to pay ongoing attention to this issue. Assistance team members were able to initiate new relationships with people who knew little or nothing about them by building new relationships upon prior relationships with a few people who provided links to new people. This process is part of the assistance process and if not handled properly, can limit the nature of the relationships that resulted.

The assistance team members came to the school with a wide range

previous work experiences in the school district and its surrounding community. The team director, for example, had not only taught in the school district, but she had been one of the students in the school where the assistance team focused its energy. The assistance team director often mentioned this fact to individuals in the school and occasionally during meetings with other people from various parts of the school district in the following manner: "Please don't ask me to tell you how long ago this was, but I remember that my first grade class was in the 'old building' here in Room 101." (Then she would laugh along with the others in the group.) This point was mentioned to the principal of the school during a brief tour of the school for the assistance team members when they first began work there. This fact seemed to be a more concrete way of telling the principal what the assistance team members meant when they made general statements bout the range of experiences the individual assistance team members brought to the school district.

4. Practitioner to practitioner. The basic assumptions that influenced this aspect of the assistance team relationship building with school people stem from the belief that practitioners are able to share information and receive assistance from other practitioners more easily than from other role groups such as "specialists" and "researchers" who often provide access to a wide range of information, but are not experienced in practical applications and considerations that are linked with the information they have to share.

The second assumption revolves around the fact that having district level staff aware of what the assistance team is doing on an ongoing

basis at the local school level is an important step toward the district sanctioning the assistance team's activity. Therefore, building relationships with district level staff helps to clarify and formalize the process of letting the district staff know what is going on at the local school level.

5. Networking. The team saw building and maintaining relationships in the school setting as a networking function. It was the responsibility of the assistance team member to become part of or familiar with existing networks as well as initiate, or support the initiation of new ones. In the Chicago Region at the local school level the primary networking was concentrated on the need for an increase in the interaction between the teachers who were beginning to work together in a new program. As part of the assistance and entry process, assistance team members became acquainted with the teachers as individuals while they interacted with them in groups as well. This combination of individual and group interaction provided opportunities for the formal and informal sharing of the types of networks and communication patterns that existed among the teachers in the new program, as well as some indications of links to other teachers and other programs in the school as a whole. Often these links were shared with the assistance team members verbally while in other cases the team members drew conclusions based on their own observations.

The team director acknowledged one aspect of this during one of her conversations with the DTA project officer, on September 16, 1976, when she stated that in her opinion "...the presence of the assistance people helped school people to get to know each other." The implication here

is that the presence of the assistance team created a need for school people to interact with each other. In some cases, these interactions were to get a better sense of what the assistance team was there for, and what others in the school thought of the assistance team's presence.

6. Providing resources. The members of the assistance team viewed themselves as resources to the school people. As resource people the assistance team members felt that they brought the same types of skills much like those of the average educational consultant. The primary difference was that the members of the assistance team attempted to be more cognizant of how the information they shared as resource people fit the needs of the school district, based on their knowledge of that school district, the student population in general, as well as the Chicago Public School system as a whole.

7. Linking to researchers. The assistance team director stated that the Chicago Region viewed building and maintaining a relationship with school people as one of its main goals. One aspect of the DTA mandate was for the project to test "linkage", the process of defining ways in which information can be taken from one place and used or adapted for use in another setting. The role of the assistance team in linkage was to identify and or respond to requests for information from, individual school settings (such as a classroom, a group of teachers, a parent and a teacher in a classroom) where the information gathered in other school settings by the DTA research team, could be tested to get clues about transferability and usefulness of the information in new settings.

8. Development of tactics to maximize relationship building. The team's consciousness about the importance of building relationships

can also be seen in the number of tactics that were thought about and implemented. The next section describes a number of these tactics.

Tactics in Relationship Building

Relationships require involvement from both sides. Technical assistance teams cannot build and maintain relationships without some degree of willingness, receptivity and readiness on the part of the school group. This paper is not then primarily focused at the more limited issues of gaining that receptivity. Much of the discussion about entry, frequently defined as gaining that receptivity has overshadowed the importance of ongoing relationship building to the technical assistance work.

Technical assistance groups must usually initiate events that will affect relationship building. Thus, to an unusual degree the groups have some control in their planning as to the outcomes of the possible relationships. Thus, the tactics the team uses are of interest. Several of the major tactics of the Chicago team are described in this section.

1. Involving school participants in contact events. Contact was made with the influential people already known by individual team members such as the district superintendent, principals, assistant principals and teachers who had worked in the district for many years. The initial contact persons were asked to give their opinions of the type of work the assistance team anticipated doing, as well as any suggestions they had for improving the work strategy. In the same interaction the individuals were asked with whom the assistance team members should talk,

to gain the support of other individuals in the district, who needed to be informed of the assistance team's actions. This technique was implemented in practically every instance. Usually, the Chicago Assistance Team had already begun to identify and make contact with the same individuals who were mentioned, yet they would allow the people from whom they elicited the information to say how they felt, and who should be contacted. Asking for names of other people also provided an opportunity for team members to say whether or not the individual had been contacted, or sometimes to share the plan for contacting the person(s). The name-gathering and plan-sharing technique allowed school people to assist team members in becoming involved in and familar with the school district. At the same time, school people were given additional information, and the opportunity to shape entry plans, as well as provide concrete first-hand experiences, through which the assistance team members demonstracted they were not attempting to appear as though they "knew everything." The assistance team members were also able to give "concrete examples" *of the ways in which they thought they might be of assistance

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*In this example, the term "concrete examples" is used to define the set of direct experiences that lead to a greater understanding of the types and range of skills and expertise that were available to the school district in which the assistance team worked.

One hypothesis related to concrete experiences is that it is through them that relationships are built and developed. Homans states that "...the more frequently persons interact with one another, the stronger their sentiments of friendship for one another are apt to be." This is not to say that the assistance team members attempted to become "close friends" of the school people, but is used here to show that a variety of concrete experiences as defined above increased the amount of interaction between the assistance team members and the school people, and thereby affected the nature of the resulting relationships. George C. Homan. The Human Group. Hartcourt, Brace and World, Inc. Copyright 1950, p. 133.

to people in the schools. This contact tactic was used throughout the work, permeated other tactics and directly led to the networking already described.

2. Designing activities that required cooperation and interaction. Another tactic the assistance team used was to create and build activities which encouraged interaction and cooperation between members of the team and members of the school district as soon as possible. The assistance team was reluctant to be viewed as the "experts in the workshop setting" at the district level and attempted to structure events such as workshops in ways that involved some of the school people themselves to demonstrate the various levels of expertise available in the schools and the school district as a whole. The Study Team field researcher notes from March 9, 1977, describe a meeting when the issues of team exposure and ways to involve school people were discussed:

> C: The twenty-fourth is the day after the meeting with the principals.
>
> F. That allows DTA (Documentation and Technical Assistance Project) to gain more exposure in the district. Can we use people from (school name) as presenters?

In this case, the team decided not to involve school people as presenters. The point is that the possibility of involving school people in a variety of ways occurred in a manner that seemed natural, while considering other issues.

One assistance team member said during one of the team's planning meetings that she had been advised by a key administrator to play a "low-key" role when interacting with members of a school district consulting team. The school district consultants were school district

employees and provided assistance similar to that of the assistance team.

3. Preparing for school visits. Getting ready for the visit to the school was an important aspect of the building of relationships in the assistance team. There was a desire to make sure the school people knew that the process of preparing to work in the school was not done casually at the last minute. In fact, the assistance team members reported their progress for planning activities in the school as part of their ongoing interactions with school people. The team also employed written evaluations after key events as tools for analyzing, checking and discussing the relationships that were being built and maintained.

4. Varying relationships to type of assistance. In discussing the work of the Chicago Region Assistance Team with various individuals working in the school district, we found that their relationships with assistance team members varied depending upon the type of assistance they expected to receive. For example, some teachers emphasized their relationships with individual assistance team members who had been helpful with a concern or concerns that were particular to them and to their classroom. For example, one of the teachers in the school where the team concentrated the bulk of its resources said:

> (Technical Assistance Specialist #1) helped by supplying and suggesting materials regarding open education. It made me feel good about what I was doing.

Other teachers in the same program said:

> I appreciated (C) as someone you could talk to about problems and (B) as a source for obtaining resource information. In (C) and (B) I felt I had an 'ally' in terms of educational philosophy.

Some school staff discussed the relationships that had developed between them and the members of the team as a whole:

> If it is possible, the Technical Assistance Team should try to establish a one-to-one relationships with each person in the group. I feel I had this kind of relationship, but I'm not sure the others did. The large group sessions are good, but I feel it's important to have a closer relationship. I need someone who can come into the classroom, sit down with me and help me evaluate what's going on.
>
> I find very few faults. The people from CNS* are very well trained. They have teaching experience and this makes them very sympathetic.
>
> They didn't just walk off the street without ever being in the classroom. I think they have done a very good job. Based on the definition of technical assistance, I find very few faults at all. However, there were occasional slip-ups in communication.
>
> It would be helpful if there were someone, possibly a third person, to go into classrooms and work with individual teachers on an individual basis. Some teachers need help, but won't admit it. They need a crutch.
>
> They should have sat down with us in September and said, 'Why don't you do this, or why don't you do that...' Something like, 'let's develop a reading center in the corridor and we'll work with three or four kids to set it up.'
>
> I have been frustrated by the lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities. In several instances, I would have liked the team to intervene. Both (B) and (C) tried to be very positive at the sessions, but I know they were aware of things not going the way they should, the learning centers and team teaching, for example. Others didn't have the same concepts. I would have liked (B) to step in and change course, if possible. At times, I felt that (B) was upset about the way things were going and I would like to see these feelings brought forth and honestly shared with the group. I suggest that, in further interactions with the school, and other schools, the questions of personal feelings and defined roles have to be dealt with.

*CNS Center for New Schools the organizational sponsor for the DTA project.

5. Utilizing outside resources. The resource people brought to the school district by the assistance team were, to a degree, viewed as extensions of the assistance team because it was based on the recommendation of the assistance team members that the school people agreed to have the outside resource people come. Therefore, the relationships that were being built and maintained by the assistance team were affected by the quality of what the outside resource person had to offer. In reflecting on some of the outside resource people who had interacted with them as a result of the assistance team's work, school people made the following statements:

> Outside expe[illegible]uch as (J)* should be brought in right at the beginning. There is also a need to bring in local experts.
>
> The speakers were most helpful. They let me know how important parents are and some things we can do to involve them.
>
> Talking to (J) and (P)* made us more realistic. I can see it will probably take us five years.
>
> Although I could empathize with Mrs. (S)** as a parent, as a teacher I felt her type of pressures in the school and classrooms could be a very disturbing factor. She appeared to be a vibrant agitator.
>
> The Technical Assistance Team improved my understanding of [illegible]en Corridor, learning centers, and interaction between floors (in the same school building). I thought that the sessions with (J) from (M) and the two visitors from N.Y. and (F) were very helpful. Those sessions made one stop and think of what really has to be done here. The visitors kept saying that we look promising. After listening to them I feel frustrated as I feel that we are not in motion but in an incubation period.

*A teacher from one of the educational settings being studied by the project.
*Resource people from two of the educational settings being studied by the project.
**An experienced parent/school/community resource person brought to the school district by the Assistance Team from one of the sites being studied.

Not only was it important for the assistance team to consider the issues mentioned above in carrying out the initial steps of initiating and building relationships, it also became necessary for team members to consider what was necessary to maintain some of those relationships once they began. The following section discusses some of the factors the Assistance Team had to address.

6. Maintaining relationships. Assistance team members emphasized the importance of having exposure in the school and the school district they worked in. This was due to the following:

> School people would come to understand that the Assistance Team was serious regarding its statements about being available to assist.
>
> The members of the assistance team had additional opportunities to meet and interact with the people in the school district, thereby learning more about that school setting on a first-hand basis. This also provided additional opportunities for the school people to learn more about the team and the project in formal and informal ways.
>
> An attempt was made on the part of the assistance team to demonstrate the fact that it was a team in a variety of ways. For instance, in several meetings the assistance team discussed the importance of the whole team attending some of the workshops and school meetings the team sponsored, carried out or participated in. Importance was placed on this because the team would then project the image of a team while also giving the people they were working with the opportunity to interact with other members of the assistance team who carried out roles which did not require them to interact with school people on a day-to-day basis.

A balance had to be sought, because the team was also aware that the presence of too many team members (more than the number of school people in attendance at an event) could have an adverse effect on the relationships that were being built. The presence of too many team people could be viewed by some school people as an over-anxious attempt

on the part of the assistance team to do something in a particular school or school district. In other words, it might appear as though the assistance team were trying to force itself on the school people.

At times, team members raised questions about the nature of the relationships that appeared to be developing between individual team members and individual school or district staff members, always questioning what it meant for an assistance team member to become "too close" or to appear to be too close to the various individuals in the school and school district. For example, team members felt that if one of them was linked too closely with the district superintendent, he or she could be viewed by school people as one of the superintendent's staff members or informants. Therefore, they would also be viewed as being in the school district to do what the district superintendent wanted done, which may or may not have been the same as what the teachers felt they needed. In the local school setting there was a need for the team to watch the images projected between their members and the principal of the school, for similar reasons.

Assistance specialists spent time talking individually to teachers and to the principal of the school. Assistance team members viewed these meetings as important ways for gaining a better understanding of the school and in what areas individuals therein felt that they needed assistance. It became clear in a March 15, 1977 meeting with the teachers with whom the Specialists worked closely, that some teachers thought once they told assistance team members about things they thought the school needed, they did not have to say the same thing to the principal directly.

Teachers thought the specialists would communicate messages for them. This became clear in the meeting when a specialist asked the teachers if they had considered a meeting with the principal to discuss things they thought necessary to get their school project going more smoothly. Teachers stated that they thought that was what was discussed during individual meetings the assistance specialists had with the principal. When informed otherwise, the teachers inquired about the content of the discussions during assistance specialists' meetings with the principal. Assistance specialists explained that their meetings were part of the ongoing activity to keep everyone informed of team activities while at the school. They also explained that they got information from the principal regarding ways they might be of direct assistance to her. They avoided the role of message carrier between teachers and principal because they felt that it was more productive for them to assist in getting school people in the setting to sit down and talk directly to each other, rather than become dependent on someone from outside coming in to communicate messages for them.

Several aspects of the assistance team/school people interaction became somewhat shaky ground for the assistance team to tread. One area where this was manifested revolved around the assistance team having access to information such as that shared when the district superintendent met only with the principals in the district and assistance team members were present. This caused some school people who did not have the same information, or only indirect access to it, to be somewhat cautious about the assistance team.

Therefore, the trust ingredient became a particulary sensitive one for a number of reasons. For example, when the assistance team members came to the school district they found that there already existed a series of relationships and interaction patterns between the school people themselves. These interaction patterns and relationships were formal and informal based on the fact that people have had to interact with each other due to their job descriptions or due to the fact that they shared common needs, experiences and/or interest. Then enters the assistance person who may or may not have links to the already existing patterns of interaction and relationships in the school district. In the case of the Chicago Region assistance team the already existing interaction patterns and relationships were tapped as the primary source of information for the team to begin its process of building relationships. At one school in the district the assistance team members did a workshop on the topic of parent involvement. The assistance team invited an outside resource person to attend the workshop and discuss the ways in which the people from her school setting in Los Angeles had dealt with the issue of parent involvement. This site was one that had been identified by members of the project's research team and other members of the project as one of the sites that was doing some interesting things to get parents involved in what was occurring at their local schools. The people at that site had developed training techniques for increasing parent involvement, and they had worked in the area of parent involvement for a number of years.

The school where the assistance team initially planned to hold the workshop postponed the event due to other scheduling conflicts. The

assistance team decided to hold the workshop at another school in the district and began to find another setting where the school community members had expressed an interest in information on the topic of parent involvement. The team director contacted one of the assistant principals in the school district to see if people at her school would be interested in the workshop. After some checking with teachers, the school-community representative, and principal, the assistant principal (who is a close friend of the team director) said people in her school were interested. In preparation, the team gathered information from members of the school community about parent involvement at their school, and forwarded the information to the resource person prior to her arrival in Chicago. After the workshop assistance team members were complimented on the preparation and content of the event by the school and community members who attended. In discussing the event and its initial impact on members of that school community, the assistance team members speculated they were able to enter that school setting because of the reputation of the assistant principal who gave the assistance team and its members (temporary) credibility. Based on things this assistant principal said to people in the school setting who knew and trusted her, she was able to convince them that what the assistance team had was worth finding out more about. In fact, had it not been for the friendship between the assistance team director and the assistant principal it would have been quite difficult to find another setting for the workshop in such a short period of time. The assistance team anxiously sought the alternative setting because they were attempting to carry out the project's mandate of finding whether

the information from the other setting (Los Angeles) would be useful to school people in Chicago. In this particular case the attempt was to find out more about having an outside resource person bring information from one school setting to be shared in another. Had the team postponed this activity they would have delayed getting information for project purposes.*

The team director pointed out that during the early stages of the relationship-building process, she had to be particularly aware of the relationships that were in existence between the school district people. This was important because one thing that could impede the process of the school people developing relationships with the assistance team members was the degree to which some felt the presence of the assistance team would divert the relationships they had already developed with other school people, and therefore view the presence of the assistance team as a potential threat to existing relationships. This was demonstrated in a variety of ways such as with one teacher in the school where the team spent the majority of its time, who interacted with members of the assistance team during their regular meetings with the staff of the school's open corridor program.

On several occasions this teacher was observed talking with one of the assistance team specialists, discussing how long she had been at the school and how well she knew the principal after being there for such a long time. Afterward, when our field researcher discussed the interactions with the assistance team members, one of them stated that

the teacher probably emphasized her knowledge of the principal for a couple of reasons. First, she wanted the team members to know that she was willing to help them learn more about the school and the people in it. Second, her knowledge of the principal indicated there were already some formal and informal lines of communication between the teachers and the principal that were viewed as important to the school and by sharing them with the assistance team members, it would become clear that the team should be careful not to interfere.

One of the assistance specialists reflected on his attempts to assist two of the teachers in the program after one requested the assistance specialist come and help "straighten out" some differences between them. Attending the meeting in place of the assistance specialist who was requested, the second assistance specialist said, "One lesson was learned. Intervening as an arbitrator (a role which was consciously avoided by assistance team members) requires sensitivity, tact, wisdom, a good relationship with the parties concerned, luck, and a smooth quick exit." He went on to say that the session had been productive in that teachers made some decisions that seemed to be in the direction of solving their problems. (Holliday, September 1977)

In some cases school people attempted to demonstrate the existence of relationships between themselves and other members in the school district (usually in a position of authority) by telling the assistance team member how they thought the person in the authority position was going to react to a particular action initiated by the assistance team, or an incident that occurred at the school setting, the implication being

that the school staff member knew the person well enough to be able to anticipate how he or she would react to a particular idea or event.

It became the task of the assistance team member to determine the degree to which he or she wanted to consider an individual's prediction as useful information and change the plans based on the information, or allow the plans to remain the same. In instances such as these, the assistance team member's own knowledge of the school district and the people in it, was heavily relied upon to make decisions. In any case, the assistance team members felt that they could not afford to disregard a prediction of this type, regardless of how he or she decided to use the information. The information had to be given some consideration, and was often discussed with other team members.

7. Correcting Misperceptions. Another more subtle aspect of building and maintaining relationships that rests primarily with the assistance team members is that of observing and reacting to people's misconceptions of the project and the assistance team. For example, one of the assistance team members is quoted by the Study Team Field researcher as having said that early in the assistance process "... (district staff member) once thought that DTA was a very rich organization with money to hand out." Therefore, it became necessary for the assistance team member to clear up misunderstandings of this type and still maintain the type of relationships required for the ssistance eam and the project to try out its ideas and information as part of the DTA technical assistance experiment.

The Chicago Region sought an advisory role. Assistance team members hypothesized that existence of this type of a role would be confirmed once school people began to request their assistance. The Team Director states that assistance team members made conscious efforts to clarify that they were not ". . .free consultants to help do anything (school people might ask them to do)." They did this by "continuously" referring to "DTA and NIE". This was necessary because it let school people know Team members were responsible to the project and its funders to some extent, and they were not free to any and everything the school people wanted them to do.

8. Ending Relationships. This paper is focused on the issue of building and maintaining relationships. It does not go into detailed discussion of ending the relationships, but it cannot be overlooked completely. This final stage of the assistance process can range from withdrawing the assistance team from a local school site or district, to ending a relationship between an individual or individuals in a school district or school. It is important to note here that based on the Chicago Region experience, ending a relationship does not necessarily mean that a particular relationship or set of relationships must come to a complete halt. It can mean that the current relationships come to an end so new ones can evolve or be negotiated, building on the experience gained from prior ones. It is also true that new relationships that evolve or those that are negotiated might result in less interaction due to negative and/or positive reasons. The point is that ending the relationship does not necessarily preclude the possibility of developing other relationships in the future. (See Holmes and Holliday, 1977)

The next section of this paper looks more closely at the concept of creating a team of assistance people to support the team's activities in the school district. An important factor here being that while the team was dealing with the day to day situations in the school district, they were also confronting some rather complex internal team issues such as (1) team leadership as it relates to authority and responsibility for individual team members; (2) relative strengths and weaknesses of individual team members in areas such as overall knowledge of the DTA project, and knowledge of the school district; (3) questions regarding role clarity stemming partly from the fact that some of the team members were hired sooner than others due to delays in project funding negotiations; (4) there were also instances of poor communication patterns between individual team members regarding information about the DTA project as well as information about the school district.

Some of these internal factors initially became evident during the first staffing changes when the roles of the first assistance person (later the team director) and her administrative assistant changed.

D. Individual Relationships and Team Functioning

While this issue has been touched in previous discussions, it emerged as an issue of major importance and thus is discussed in further detail here. In interactions during the entry stages the assistance team members presented themselves and stated the type of interactions they thought were necessary from their organizational as well as individual standpoints.

For example, members of the Chicago Region assistance team often described the project and their role in the project faced, such as using terms that were useful to people both in and outside of the project. Assistance team members attempted to link the work of the DTA project to the everyday activities and concerns of the school people, pointing out that the children were the prime concern so if they didn't do the same work or use the same terms they should remember their common desire, that the children must benefit from all of their efforts.

Assistance team members stated the nature of their work, while being open about the extent to which they were in agreement with a particular organizational viewpoint. An example of an organizational standpoint that was ocasionally mentioned in schools, was that research is viewed as an important tool for improving schools. While an individual standpoint was usually something that was not shared by members of the project as a whole, it was usually shared by more than one project member. One example of an individual standpoint that was sometimes shared was that school people must be very careful when defining parent involvement, and include in the definition roles for parents to assist

In the classroom. Some of the assistance team members felt this way because many parents see the teacher as the primary instructor in the classroom and the parents do everything they can to prepare the children for the instruction that occurs there.

Clarifying individual versus organizational standpoints was also a means for individual team members to assert their own identity within the project. A means for demonstrating to school people that individual team members were thinking individuals, and not simply pawns sent out to represent the project.

The assistance team director spent a considerable amount of time in the school district attempting to share with district staff her personal standpoint, as well as the organizational point of view, on school issues the project was studying. In most instances, she comapred her personal views with those of other members of the project. When the Chicago Region Director began to interview various school people in the district as part of the team's entry strategy, she explained who she was, where she was from in most cases, gave a brief description of the type of people working on the project and the range of skills represented.

The information provided seemed to be sufficient for most of the school people being interviewed, because when asked if they had any questions, the response was usually no. In any case the assistance team members continued to share information about the team and the project by stating that:

> One of the things we are trying to learn more about in the project is how researchers and practitioners can work together more effectively, and bring information from one place and use it in another. Therefore we spend a considerable amount of time discussing issues such as why practitioners feel the way they do about research.

In a case such as the one mentioned above, the school people are given an opportunity to see that the project and individuals within it are not attempting to deceive them by stating that there is unanimity among staff on most of the issues that school people in the educational community in general is seeking unanimity on.

Assistance team members attempted to tone down the degree in which they openly agreed or disagreed with key individuals in the school setting, particularly during the early stages of the process. This occurred because parties involved knew the relationship could end due to a high amount of contrasting individual perspectives. The issue of building relationships became one of both groups and individuals seeking the limits and the parameters of the relationship, by testing out how much they could say that was non-argumentative, preventing the people they interacted with from feeling the relationships must end at that moment, or that something had been revealed that would limit the range of subsequent interactions.

In discussing the possibilities for a workshop at one of the schools in the district, the assistance team members mentioned the possibility of including parents in the activity. The school people thought this was an excellent idea and this had become one of their primary objectives. In further explaining, the school people told the assistance team members about an idea they had as part of a forthcoming event involving parents in the activities at the school. The school people explained that the idea was to develop a quiz show similar to the television type format which would allow the parents to participate as contestants. Winning contestants would win small prizes.

Viewing the idea as creative and interesting, the assistance team members wanted to hear more and asked what the context of the quiz show would be. The school people explained that they would develop a set of questions and answers that they would give to the parents prior to the event for them to study. The questions would concentrate on a child care and childrearing, such as "What should a person do for a baby where he or she cries?" Along with the question there would be sets of possible answers and the parent would be asked to chose the correct one. In response to this the assistance team members made some indirect hints regarding the problems they saw with an activity of this type. They did this by asking the school people if they thought this type of an activity would make the parents feel somewhat uncomfortable, because they would be forced by the structure of the activity to give incorrect answers in a public setting. The school people said they had considered embarrassing parents but decided to prevent this by making sure the atmosphere was fun so people involved would really enjoy themselves.

When the assistance team members began to see that their hints were not working they changed the conversation back to their own work in the school. In the car after the meeting the assistance team members told me (the Study Team field researcher) that they would like to have made the point of the activity possibly making parents uncomfortable even stronger for several reasons. The questions did not have single correct answers. The topic was one that many parents had had more experience dealing with than many of the school staff,

and the quiz show format as it had been described would not allow the parents to accurately demonstrate this knowledge and experience.

The team members also questioned whether it was really necessary for the parents to demonstrate their knowledge of children to the school people, rather than the school people acknowledging that this was something that the parents already knew, and building their interactions with the parents from that basis. The assistance team members also stated that they had deliberately not pursued the topic any further, because they felt that they had not established the type of relationships with the school people that would allow them to work out differences of opinion of this nature.

Although differences of opinion between team members and school people was an area of careful consideration for the team and in the early stages if their work, assistance team members forfeited some of the opportunities to express their personal opinions, as a way of placing as little stress as possible on the relationships they were attempting to maintain or build. This did not mean that as the relationships grew, and the assistance team members' opinions differed seriously from school people they would not make these differences clear due to fear of jeopardizing the relationship. Assistance eam members were also aware of the fact that hiding serious differences during interactions could be extremely detrimental. It then became necessary for the Assistance team members to state their differing opinion in a manner that, while not detracting from the degree to which they differed, did not imply that they were not open to further discussion.

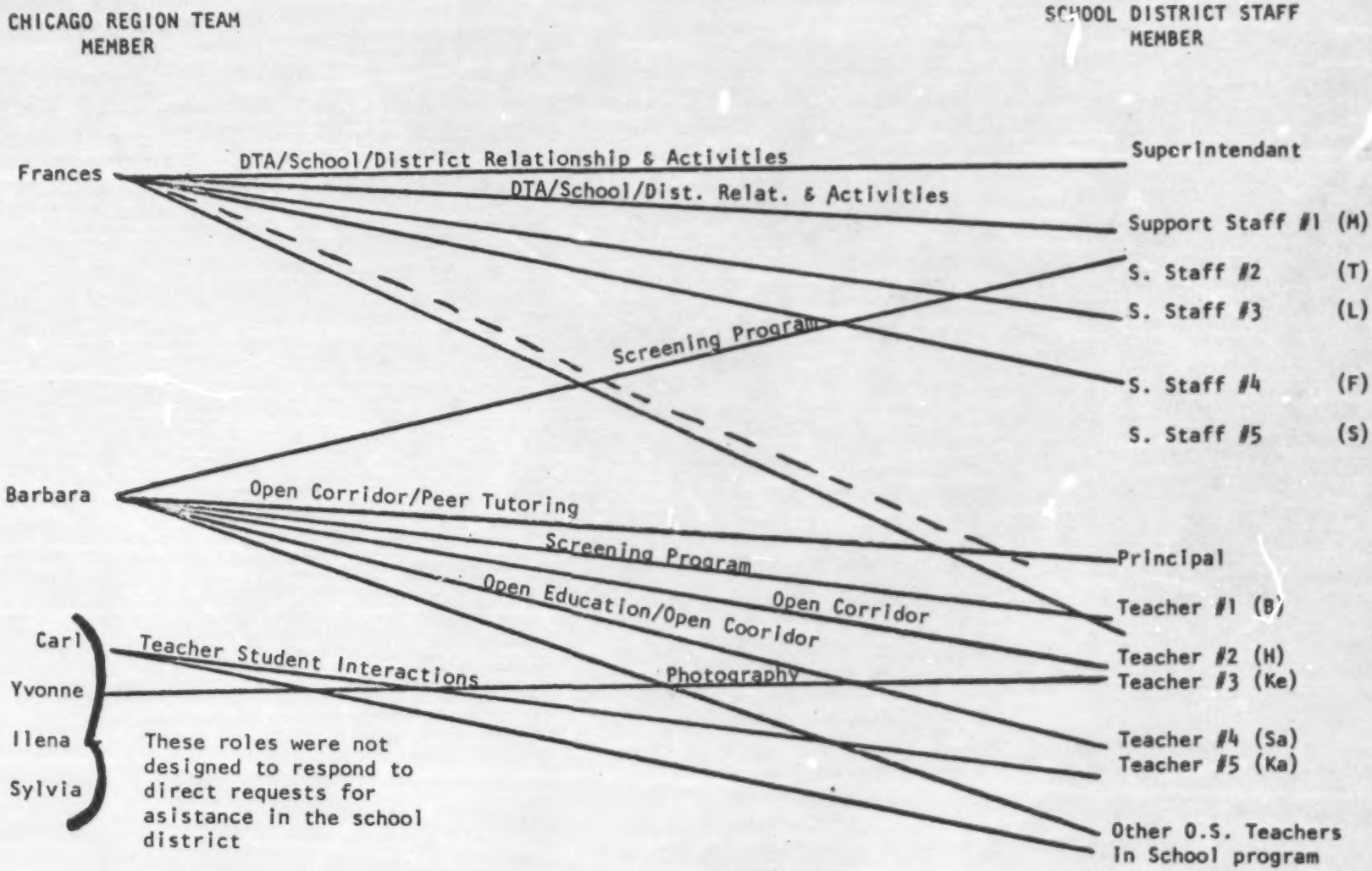

FIGURE III: INTERACTION PATTERNS BASED ON REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE DURING THE ASSISTANCE PROCESS

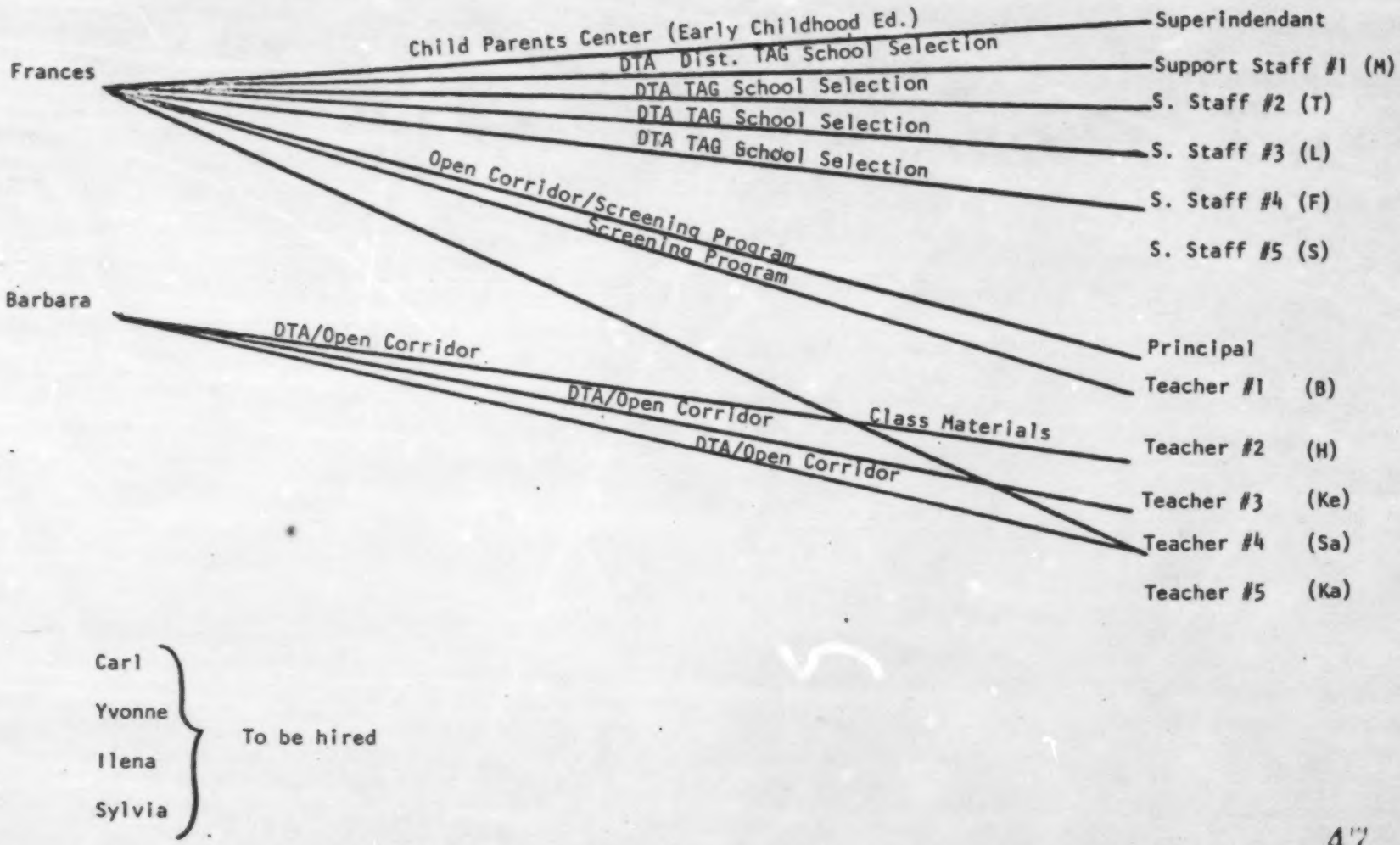

FIGURE 11: INTERACTION PATTERNS BASED ON REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE DURING THE ENTRY PROCESS

It was the intention of the assistance team not only to be useful to those individuals whom they worked with over a period of time, but also to those who might attend one assistance event or have only one discussion with a team member. The new participants would not know what the project was about and the objectives of the assistance team members. Therefore, in every formal assistance event such as a workshop or presentation to a group of school people the assistance team members. Therefore, in every formal assistance event such as a workshop or presentation to a group of school people the assistance team members tool time to explain who they were and what the project was about, usually qualifying their statements by saying that they were giving this information for the people who did not already have it. The assistance team members designed activities so that people interacting with the team for the first time were given the basic information they needed to take part in the activity. Giving new people information was often done through a brief summary of the activities of the team prior to that point or by providing time for participants to read information together.

E. Internal Team Support and School/Staff Relationships

The uncertainities and complexities that the team members found in the work required that the Team provided individual members with strong support. The internal functioning of the team directly affected relationships between team members and school staff. The complexities of these interactions makes it impossible to assign definite weights to how much a particular internal issue affected school staff relation-

ships. In some cases it was strong and in others surprising enough not very strong. School people often regarded some internal issues as the business of the team and thus of little real concern to them.

When the initial entry process was accomplished the assistance team began some ongoing assistance activities; the responsibility for responding to the needs of the school was handed over by the team director to the technical assistance specialists. This resulted in one of the people in the role of administrative assistant on another project being promoted to assistance specialist; the experience in the previous role was seen as a strength. The second assistance specialist was hired at a later date. Already familiar with the project and the Region director's work in the school district, the first assistance specialist demonstrated that her skills and past educational experiences would make it easy for her to take on additional responsibilities in a short period of time. The first assistance specialist took on the responsibility of responding to the needs of school people and at the same time, assisted in the screening and the selection of the second assistance specialist. The selection process was designed to involve the assistance specialist as well as other members of the team as part of the project's belief that this would lead to a stronger, well-functioning team.

The first assistance specialist had been introduced to school people by the team director and had been given the task of interviewing the staff of the open corridor program in the school where most of the team's efforts were to be concentrated to get to know the staff better

and to collect data for a workshop the team was planning. The first assistance team specialist had discussed the workshop with other members of the project as well as some of the school staff and had designed a tentative workshop form as part of the team's response to the teachers' needs as they had been expressed in the interview data.

In addition to direct involvement in the team's assistance activities the first assistance specialist visited three of the project's research sites to get firsthand views of some of the settings where the research was being done. These site visits were carried out in conjunction with the visits made to the sites by the Technical Assistance/Documentation Team Linker. The Linker visited the sites to become aware of the range of information that she might refer to the other assistance team members when asked to assist them in identifying useful research data and other types of information. The first assistance team specialist had also become familiar with some of the people working on the project, having interacted in key meetings, or having heard discussions about work being done by staff members in other cities.

The plan was for the two assistance specialists to share the task of providing assistance to school people. The selection and hiring of the second assistance person took longer than anticipated. By the time the second assistance specialist was hired, assistance activities were underway, yet he had become familiar with the project, the educational settings under study, the school district where the information was being treated, as well as the roles of other members of

the team. The second assistance team specialist was the only male member of the team. He was often singled out and asked for his opinion as a male, on the actions of individual team members and district staff. Sometimes this was done in a seemingly joking manner. Often the second assistance specialist became a primary person during the discussion of intra-team issues with each of the other team members who usually confided in him, and often encouraged him to play a facilitative role. In many of the schools he visited, the second assistance specialist would see people he had previously met in other settings. These people were often teachers he had taught with in other schools.

A comparison of Figure II (on providing assistance) shows how the responsibility for responding to assistance requests shifted from the team director to the first assistance specialist, and primarily remained there even when the second assistance person was hired, despite plans to have two assistance specialists share the responsibility.

Although the team director maintained some of her ties and communications with the school people, the primary activities in this area were carried out by the assistance team specialists. The director maintained that this was the best way toward the type of role clarity that was necessary for the assistance team to be effective. The assistance team director stated that the best way for the assistance specialists to determine the extent and value of their work was through their having the responsibility for the assistance work. She went on to say that she constantly reminded assistance team members that she was available to them as a resource and that they should call on her

for support when they needed her skills.

The assistance specialists were reluctant to call on her in that manner because they felt it would appear as though they were not able to do their jobs adequately. This created a double bind for the members of the team.

Assistance team members viewed the changing of areas of responsibility differently from the team director, feeling that they should respond to the requests for assistance as a team and distribute the resources (including person power) of the team as a whole. Therefore, the resource allocation, as well as the carrying out of some of the assistance acitivites would be done by the person coordinating (the Team Director). When the team discussed this issue as a group, it became clear that there was agreement that the expertise of each individual team member should be matched to specific school-related tasks. The area of disagreement was the degree to which the Team Director should serve as the overall team coordinator, versus serving as an assistance person working directly with schools. The first assistance team specialist felt that to deal with what had become a work overload for her, she needed the support of all of the assistance team members to respond adequately to the requests for assistance. The team director stated that she thought that it was better to have the assistance team specialists take on the bulk of this responsibility early when they become an assistance specialist, and tap the support of the other team members to carry out individual tasks. Meaning that the team director included decisions about when and when not to use the time and skills of other team members as part of the work of the assistance specialist.

Later this issue surfaced with greater force because the first assistance specialist felt she was being overloaded with work when other members of the team were not doing their part. She resigned shortly thereafter.

Staffing changes in the project as a whole and the Chicago Region became an issue for the assistance team. There were questions from school people about the assistance team and the organization it representated ranging from why certain staff members were no longer on the project to ideas on educational theory. This is something that everyone involved in the interaction thought had undeterminable effects on the relationships that were being developed and maintained in the school district. The fact the staffing changes as well as other internal team issues had undeterminable effects on the relationships that were in the school district, to say nothing about relationships that might have been prevented due to internal team factors gives the reader an idea of how vast and complex this aspect of the assistance process is. Therefore let us suffice it to say that the Chicago assistance team was a target when thinking that the internal workings of the team was a key factor in relationship building and maintaining them. This is also the area where the team experienced the most difficulty.

In the concluding section of this paper we move from considering the more tangible aspects of relationship building and maintaining (such as holding workshops, providing materials, and demonstrating sincerity) to other, more intangible, factors, including definitions of such terms as "relationship" and "trust".

III. CONCLUSION

No single definition captures the concept of relationship building as it was done by the assistance team, but combinations of pieces of the definitions allow the term to be used as something that is not necessarily concrete or tangible. In describing the Chicago Region Assistance Team the emphasis is placed on terms such as: to form, unite gradually, to cause, fashion or develop, tailor, enhance, and improve. The core of the concept is one of starting with the relationships that existed, and building as previously described, to something more influential, effective and useful. In describing and discussing the process of building and maintaining relationships the members of the assistance team placed a great deal of emphasis on the concept of trust. Trust is one of the primary relationship-building ingredients. Trust means ". . .to place confidence in, depend, to permit to stay or go somewhere, or to do something without fear or misgiving; to rely on the truthfulness or accuracy of; to hope or expect confidently."

Since the element of trust is an integral part of the notion of building and maintaining relationships. As stated earlier the team placed importance on demonstrating that they were people who could be trusted. To expand on the notion of trust and its importance to relationship building, the following section of this paper discusses some of the ways which trust is defined and implications for the work of the assistance team.

Trust is a key concept for understanding the building of relationships. Previous interactions and relationships define the level of

trust which exists or which one can assume exists. The level of trust is built from previous successful interactions and provides mutual opportunities for the range of potential interaction which then, in turn, affect the level of trust. The higher the trust level, the greater the potential opportunities.

It is at this point that school people feel that they have some clues about what they and the school stands to gain from the interaction, and they see potential for the assistance team to gain from the interaction as well. This is a particularly important stage of the assistance process in that prior to this time, the assistance team members attempted to define their anticipated role and contribution to the setting in a variety of ways. Such as making sure they do not appear as if they are attempting to take on roles of individuals already working in the school setting. For example, during one of the early workshops in the district carried out by the Chicago Region Director on the topic of early childhood education, there was a question about speech patterns of preschool children and techniques for identifying speech problems early. The team director (in the role of outside resource person to the district, and having previously given a brief presentation on testing preschool children prior to the question) explained that her expertise was not in the area of speech even though she had some experience in that area. The team director then asked the school district's speech teacher (a specialist) to answer the question. After the question had been answered, the team director state she was glad the speech teacher was present, because being able to defer the question to someone with more experise in the area demonstrated how important it was

for the people working with children to pool their expertise and share what they know with each other for the benefit of the children.

When trust is established. It does not necessarily mean the assistance person has completed the process of building a relationship. It means that they have been given the go-ahead, "say-more" sign. In essence the school people are saying that they are willing to hear more, and that they are willing to wait to make decisions about the type of relationship that results. It is also a statement that the school people are willing to place their confidence in, rely on, and expect confidently as trust is defined earlier. What this means is that the school people feel that they will get something as a result of the wait, so the interactions are allowed to continue.

In addition to the trust factor, several other characteristics are involved. They are things that I call shared experiences. These shared experiences might be experiences that the individuals had as a result of participation in the same event at the same time or as a result of participating in similar events possibly in different settings yet leaving the individuals involved to similar conclusions.

More concretely a shared experience could be having lived in the same city, having had the same elementary school, or attending the same teachers meeting the week before. Shared experiences can encompass ideas, ideals, resources in the form of consultants or financial support. Shared experiences can also encompass familarity with similar circumstances such as a school district with limited resources or having to design a plan to involve parents in school activities. Shared experiences can also include individuals who have the same needs and

or strategies toward certain goals.

Different combinations of these characteristics as stated above lead to various types of relationships. Therefore, different relationships can be defined and described with many of them having shared characteristics. When the shared characteristics in a relationships between two individuals change, there is potential for that overall relationships to change.

The same two individuals can have different relationships with each other based on different patterns of shared characteristics, simultaneously or sequentially. What happens in one relationship can have definite effects on the other relationship. To build and maintain a relationship, consideration must be given to the effects of carryover from one relationship to the other. Because relationship-building can include sharing of idea, beliefs, perspectives and secrets, it becomes harder to maintain an objective view of relationships as they develop. This difficulty is due to the fact that a certain degree of sharing implies some level of acceptance, as well as some level of assuming and taking some things for granted. It then becomes hard to determine when the relationship would, or could when apparently necessary, come to an end. This is complicated still further by the fact that relationships need not always come to a close. Often they evolve into new relationships built on knowledge that is gained from prior ones.

A relationship can evolve from one that is limited to one that is more encompassing, or it may become even further limited, and possibly more easily defined. Relationships are responsive to and directly affected by the social and even physical milieu in which they occur. The opposite of building relationships in a state of dissolution--scattering

the identifications, associations and acquaintances in a setting and/or creating settings and conditions that discourage formal and informal collaboration and interaction.

Building relationships is a broad and complex aspect of all assistance work. The status of the interactive relationships between assistance team members and site participants always requires some attention from the assistance team. While a relationship may be characterized in certain ways at a specific time, it never becomes frozen and is always subject to change. Building relationships is part of laying the foundation for all asistance work. The nature of the relationship influences what kinds of information can be exchanged, what kinds of roles can be undertaken, what links can be established, the kinds of materials suggested, requested and used, and the usefulness of specific information and events.

Assistance team members depended on their special knowledge of schools and the particular history of relationships with people they worked with. What degree of formality in the relationship would be most productive? Any consultant has to make this kind of judgment regarding the formal and informal dimension, but this author thinks that the shared experience base of the Chicago Assistance Team members and the school district staff increased the degree to which the assistance team was able to shift back and forth effectively along this dimension.

Figure IV shows that a number of factors can influence the relationships that are built between an assistance team and the members of the school community. It is the various combinations of these factors that determine to some degree the nature of the relationships

that result and the factors that could cause the relationships to change.

The lists of Forces in Figure IV are not exhaustive, but those in this figure represent the wide range of characteristics and the manner in which various characteristics interact to define the relationships that are built and maintained by school people and assistance team members.

In summary building and maintaining relationships is much too complex to capture in a single paper. What I have attempted to do is to scan the whole picture with an emphasis on the aspects of building and maintaining relationships that are more subtle and usually taken for granted. The remainder of this paper is in question and answer format, to present some of the information previously discussed somewhat differently as a way of emphasizing some of the factors that often get overlooked.

Why worry so much about relationships? What is the worst thing that could happen?

Assistance people were cautious, knowing that the following things could happen as a result of poor relationships in the school districts;

1. The assistance team could get a bad reputation as a result of word of mouth among school people. A bad reputation would greatly limit their opportunities for presenting themselves to others. Some school people's views were more important than others because they were more trusted as informants.

2. School people would frequently judge their relationship with the total project by their relationship with a specific staff member. If this relationship were negative, it could affect the whole team negatively.

3. Team members could say so little that the school people might feel that they have nothing to offer them.

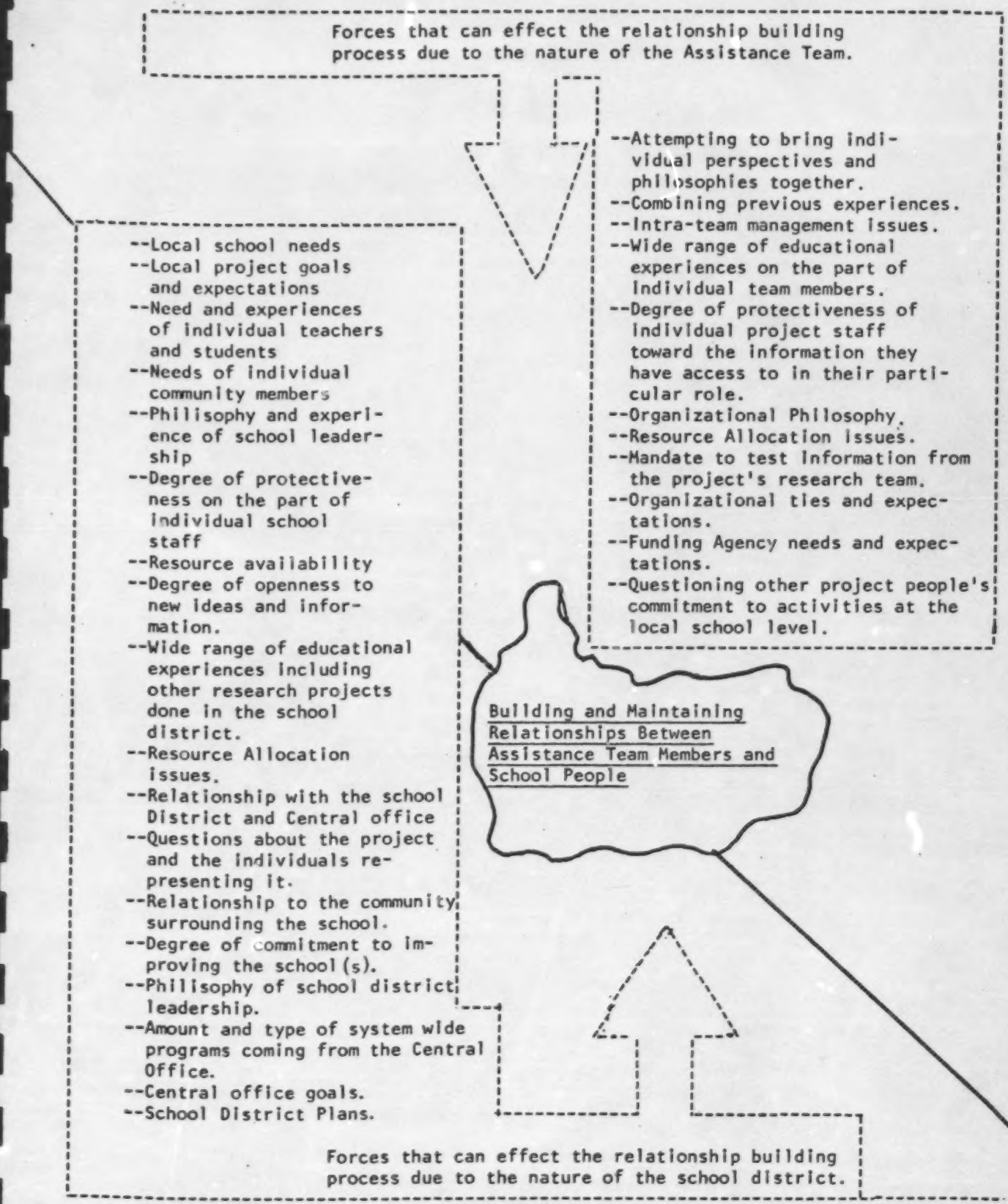
Forces that can effect the relationship building process due to the nature of the Assistance Team.
--Attempting to bring individual perspectives and philosophies together.
--Combining previous experiences.
--Intra-team management issues.
--Wide range of educational experiences on the part of individual team members.
--Degree of protectiveness of individual project staff toward the information they have access to in their particular role.
--Organizational Philosophy.
--Resource Allocation issues.
--Mandate to test information from the project's research team.
--Organizational ties and expectations.
--Funding Agency needs and expectations.
--Questioning other project people's commitment to activities at the local school level.
--Local school needs
--Local project goals and expectations
--Need and experiences of individual teachers and students
--Needs of individual community members
--Philisophy and experience of school leadership
--Degree of protectiveness on the part of individual school staff
--Resource availability
--Degree of openness to new ideas and information.
--Wide range of educational experiences including other research projects done in the school district.
--Resource Allocation issues.
--Relationship with the school District and Central office
--Questions about the project and the individuals representing it.
--Relationship to the community surrounding the school.
--Degree of commitment to improving the school(s).
--Philisophy of school district leadership.
--Amount and type of system wide programs coming from the Central Office.
--Central office goals.
--School District Plans.
Building and Maintaining Relationships Between Assistance Team Members and School People
Forces that can effect the relationship building process due to the nature of the school district.

Figure IV: Many forces interact with each other when attempting to build and maintain relationships between an assistance team and a school. These forces determine the overall form of the assistance as well as subtle changes in that form.

4. The team could give the impression of being able to do more than it could actually do, therefore forfeiting all or part of its legitimacy in the eyes of the school people.

5. School people could begin to make generalizations and conclusions in terms of how the Assistance Team could not be of assistance, based on a limited degree of interaction.

Who has the responsibility for building the relationship?

The team took the responsibility for its relationship building and demonstrated this in a variety of ways, for example:

-- attempting to take the perspective of school people in project settings where no school people were present.

-- previewing materials such as videotapes and films that would be used in their interactions with the school people, therefore providing the opportunity to take a position toward the material in advance.

Issues such as those stated earlier were given a good deal of consideration by the Chicago Region assistance team. These issues led to discussions about whether or not the team should initiate activities such as workshops, or wait until they were asked to provide some assistance. Being requested to provide assistance was viewed by the assistance team as more favorable in that they were able to begin the work with more clarity regarding the purpose of the activity, as well as the audience. Additionally, the assistance team was able to move ahead with a feeling that there was already a certain degree of readiness on the part of the school people.

In the Chicago Region, the task of building relationships was viewed as highly important, yet time-consuming. Therefore, the team discussed the need to stop "doing entry" and begin the actual assistance stages

of their work. In several discussions team members would question relationships and the effect of key interactions, such as the degree to which the team should get involved in school-related events and activities (if they were requested to do so).

The responsibility for building and maintaining a relationship rested on the assistance person because it was impossible for the assistance person to be useful without those relationships. School people were not dependent upon relationships with assistance team members because they were in contact with other school people. In fact, one of the reasons the relationships with school people were sometimes so hard to build was that the assistance team members posed a potential threat to the existing relationships between school people. The task for the assistance team members was to minimize this threat by assisting them in maintaining existing relationships and/or building new ones with other school people whom they might not have interacted or communicated with.

One important set of interactions between school people and the team members was that between the team leader and the superintendent. The team director was the person who was primarily responsible for maintaining the relationship between the school people at the district level and the other members of the Assistance Team.

Are some relationships more important to maintain than others?

Many of the working relationships that need to be established and nurtured are not easily accessed without the sanction of some key people in a school or school district. That does not mean that other relation-

ships are not important, and periodically, depending upon the stage of the assistance process, are protentially more important. For example, in the case of the Chicago Region's entry at the focus school, the staff inquired in a number of instances and settings as to whether or not the assistance team's presence had been cleared by the district superintendent. Later in the process the teachers became almost equally important because it was partly due to the team's effectiveness with the teachers that the district superintendent based his decision to continue involvement with the team.

In conclusion, Chicago Region was strong on building relationships, and not quite as strong on maintaining some of them because of issues such as personality differences and having to withdraw assistance at some point. At the local school level the team was not able to agree upon a strategy for maintaining relationships that provided the ongoing communication and ansalysis team members felt they needed. The Region Director developed a strategy that placed its importance on allowing members of the team the opportunity to get additional experiences in the schools while providing assistance. This strategy was viewed by other assistance team members as a weakness because they felt that the team's workload required everyone to do a variety of things that were not always consistent with the type of experience individual members needed more of. In addition, some of the assistance team members viewed the Director's strategy of "getting more experience to members off the team" as insults to their personal and professional integrity, considering that they had been selected to do the job as a result of the organization's hiring policies and process.

Briefly speaking, based on the work, the following issues should be taken into consideration as we discuss the issue of relationship-building:

--Assistance team members cannot be effective without adequate settings in which they can test out the information they provide as part of their service.

--School people often refer to the need for help from people outside the school who are familiar with the activities of other school settings and school districts.

--Members of the Chicago Assistance Team viewed themselves as resources.

--Several aspects of building relationships were shaped by the members of the assistance team.

--Assistance team members had to attempt to tone down the degree to which they openly agreed or disagreed with key individuals in the school setting, particularly in the early stages of the assistance provess.

--A considerable amount of time was spent in the school district attempting to share personal perspectives as well as the organizational point of view.

--School people were given an opportunity to see that, like them, individuals working on the DTA project were not always of one mind when discussing school-related issues.

--Assistance team members reported their own work progress to school people as part of their ongoing interactions with them.

--Assistance team members came to the school district with a wide range of previous work experiences.

--The assistance team saw building and maintaining relationships in school settings as a basic networking function.

--The presence of the assistance team had the potential of being viewed by some school people as a threat to the other relationships they had developed in the school or school district.

--The concept of a team to support and carry out assistance activities is an important one but it can be made extremely complex due to the internal dynamic that result between individual team members.

--Building relationships was directly linked to the substance of the work in the Chicago Region.

--Ending a relationship does not necessarily mean that a particular relationship must come to a complete halt. Often, time passes and a new relationship evolves or is created due to new needs and circumstances.

Through careful consideration of issues such as those mentioned in this paper as they relate to building and maintaining relationships, the role of the assistance team member becomes more complex. The resulting complexity then leads to possibilities for clearer, more easily defined relationships and interactions.

IV APPENDICES

BOARD REPORT

AGREEMENT WITH CENTER FOR NEW SCHOOLS (CNS) FOR ITS DOCUMENTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DTA) PROJECT IN URBAN SCHOOLS

RECOMMENDATION: Approve and ratify an agreement between the Chicago Public School District 21 and the Center for New Schools (CNS) for its project called Documentation and Technical Assistance Project in Urban Schools, funded by the National Institute of Education. A copy of the agreement and prospectus are on file in the Office of the Secretary.

DESCRIPTION: The purpose of the DTA project is to explore if and how educational research and practice can be more effectively linked together to serve the goal of improving the quality of educational experiences for urban children. DTA technical assistance efforts can be shaped to best use information from outside the client system being served to facilitate problem solving capabilities within that system.

SUPPORTIVE DATA: The Documentation and Technical Assistance Project at the Center for New Schools in Chicago and New York, and the Center for Educational Policy and Management in Eugene Oregon, has been funded by NIE to explore and provide new perspectives on the problem of making educational research useful to educational practitioners. DTA's Documentation component is describing and analyzing the efforts of technical assistance groups collaborating with nine school communities across the country.

FINANCIAL: No additional cost to the Board of Education

Respectfully submitted,

General Superintendent of Schools

School Year
September 19 - August 19

DISTRICT 21 TEACHING-LEARNING POLICY

Purpose

The District 21 Teaching Learning Policy is designed to increase the amount of productive learning by students which results from each school's efforts. It is also intended to improve teaching effectiveness through the application of proper teaching-learning strategies together with the prudent selection and use of teaching resources. The focus of the teaching-learning policy is upon the role of the school in these efforts to enhance student performance.

Assumptions*

The District 21 Teaching Learning Policy operates within the Continuous Progress/Mastery Learning concepts and is based upon the following assumptions:

1. The students of District 21 possess normal learning ability.
2. Our students can achieve at normal levels with appropriate and systematic instruction from sensitive and competent teachers.
3. Our schools have the task of providing the educational experiences that lead to student growth.
4. The monitoring of the effectiveness of instruction for individual students through evaluation is beneficial to both students and teachers.
5. It is easier to change schools than to alter home environments and social conditions.

*For a more complete discussion of the rationale that serves as the basis of these assumptions, read:

a. Bloom, Benjamin S., Human Characteristics and School Learning, McGraw-Hill, 1976.
b. Hunter, Madeline, "The Teaching-Learning Process" in The Teacher's Handbook, (Allen, D. & Seifman, Eds.) p. 146-166. Scott, Foresman & Company, 1971.
c. Block, James H., Schools, Society and Mastery Learning, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston Inc., 1974.

STUDY TEAM PROCEDURES

Study Team data was recorded on field data forms (FDFs) that were developed to allow the field researcher to describe in writing the ongoing activities of a particular event on one side of a sheet of paper and make occasional observer comments on the other to clarify what was observed. The additional column was also used to identify areas for further inquiry. The FDF forms were two-ply, designed to make duplicate copies while the original was being made.

In some settings the field researcher decided to take notes on ordinary note pads and later transfer them to the FDFs. This decision was usually made when there was a need for the researcher to draw as little attention as possible to the act of note taking, or in cases when the handling of the special duplicating paper proved awkward.

For example during one assistance team workshop on June 4, 1976, at a school in the district where the team worked for the first time, the study team field researcher decided to document the event on a regular legal size pad. In planning the event the assistance team members discussed the implications of being in a new school setting and meeting people in the school district who knew little or nothing about their work. The assistance team was particularly cautious about the number of people who attended the event representing the project, they considered cutting the number of team members to attend to prevent looking as though the number of project staff members in attendance was disproportionate to the number of school district people present. Although there was never any question as to whether or not the Study Team

field researcher should attend to document this event the careful consideration given to creating the proper setting and not over-emphasizing project roles, implied that the Study Team field researcher should do whatever possible to support this effort.

The Study Team field worker and director had ongoing informal feedback discussions with individual team members on a variety of topics. There were also two formal feedback reports made by the Study Team director and the field researcher for the assistance team. Study team members also participated in planning meetings, occasionally suggesting alternatives, or giving information when confidentiality was not violated.

Study Team field researchers interacted with administrators, teachers and parents in a variety of ongoing assistance contexts, at the school site as well as at district-level events. In addition, interviews were occasionally arranged to gain summarizing information and attitudes from key people such as workshop participants and/or people who knew a great deal about the assistance team. Attention was also given to people who knew very little about the Assistance Team and were interacting with the team for the first time. It was important for the Study Team field researchers not only to interview individuals who interacted with the members of the over time, but those who interacted with the assistance team only once or twice as well. This was usually done by having the Study Team field researcher hold brief informal chats, with some of the participants in the event as soon as the event was over, but before leaving the setting. These informal chats usually began with the Study

Team field researcher asking the participant how he or she liked the event, following from there with questions about what parts of the event that individual found useful and why. Also, several formal interviews were held with teachers and parents at a school, for example, after particularly important assistance events. These interviews were written up in a fashion similar to the notes of meetings and other data collected to maintain information on the reactions of the school people to the assistance team interventions.

Consultants were hired to assist the Study Team staff in a variety of ways, primarily to bring outside perspectives to some of the issues of concern to the Study Team. In selecting consultants consideration was given to the type of experiences they had had with similar issues in other settings, and their ability to look at various aspects of the Study Team's work and make suggestions with regard to the substance of the work as well as the methodology.

The Study Team defined "outside perspectives" as new insights on similar issues and concerns gained through similar work in other settings, which could lead to similar experiences. For instance two of our consultants had assisted other school districts in Chicago in a manner that was similar to the manner in which the Chicago Region assistance team served. Both consultants emphasized the importance of having research respond to the needs of the people in the local school settings. The other two consultants had done more research for the sake of research. Each of the consultants shared the results of their educational research experience with the members of the Study Team.

Consultants conferred intensively with the Study Team staff as well as with various assistance team members, and familiarized themselves with specific events and activities through perusal of notes, memos, and other written sources. The consultants then interviewed assistance personnel and visited the assistance site to interview administrators, teachers, and parents. In some instances, the Study Team consultants met with groups at school sites and discussed the progress of assistance activities in detail. Intensive interviewing of assistance team members was also carried out by the Study Team consultants.

Written documents such as team reports, and over 150 memos were collected by the Study Team during its study of the assistance team. The intra-team memos covered topics ranging from communications between an individual team member and the Region Director to information-sharing memos from one team member to the team at large.

Copies of letters to school people were also given to the Study Team. These communications included notification of assistance events as well as documents reflecting negotiations between school people and team members. As stated earlier an additional source of information on the assistance team and the work in the school was gained through reading copies of reports on the assistance team's work, such as the short newsletters that were handed out in the project and in the school district. The newsletters were designed to keep people up to date on the activities of the assistance team activities. Reflections of individual team members on important team and project issues, or their opinions on the outcome of a particular team activity was also a source

of written documentation on the activities of the assistance team The final source of written documentation is that of minutes of meetings, often kept by the assistance team for its own records. The Study Team had access to this information either as a result of being given copies for the Study Team files or as a result of having access to the assistance team and the project files.

TENTATIVE STUDY TEAM CONCLUSIONS

Tentative conclusions regarding the Study Team methodology are as follows: the issue of the selection of the Study Team staff was key and proved to be more time-consuming than anticipated.

The selection of the field researcher was slower than anticipated because consideration had to be given to the following issues:

--The project attempted to share decision-making responsibilities on issues such as filling positions on the project by getting input from other people about the type of person individual project members saw filling the position, even though they would not make the final decision.

--Some of the people who applied for the job withdrew their applications when they found out the job required them to go out to a predominatly Black school district on a regular basis.

--Some of the individuals who applied for the position had a wide range of experience doing research, but practically none in settings where they had to interact with individuals in urban schools. So the question here became one of how much of this other type of research skill and research knowledge would be generalizable.

--Since the Chicago Region Assistance Team was an all-Black assistance team, how important was it that the field researcher studying their work and attending events and activities with them in the field to document their work, also be Black?

It was the responsibility of the Study Team Director to give consideration to these issues and get input from other people in the project as part of the selection process to fill the position of Chicago Region Field Researcher. Therefore, the process of filling this position took longer than initially anticipated. This had a direct effect on the amount of time that was then spent documenting the acitivities of the team, and resulted in using two field researchers rather than one.

The process of recording information on the field data forms proved useful for making copies of the data for the purpose of filing and sharing, but this was primarily because it was thought that team members would be able to read each other's data and share ideas during the analysis process. When the team came together to do this type of analysis there was not enough time for the type of reading required for in-depth analysis; therefore, it became necessary for the team members to summarize their data, either orally or in short written papers.

Consultants to the Study Team were useful to its members in the process of thinking out what they did or did not know about the settings. They are also helpful in suggesting techniques and strategies for data collection for various Study Team purposes.

The analysis process would have been faster, and probably more effective, had the individual field researchers begun to write more short, analytical papers during the time they were carrying out their research. This would have allowed us to see what type of information was gathered best, and through what techniques. This also meant that the steps toward writing the final document would have been in progress sooner.